



Missionaries of the Poor

Newsletter 2018 Lenten Season




Live, Trust
have Faith

From the Founder's Desk

"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?" Is.58:6

Live, Trust, have Faith!



This beautiful story tells about Lent perfectly. It is the story of Elijah and the widow. No rain had fallen on the land. The Lord said to Elijah, "I have designated her to provide for you." He went to the city, a widow was gathering sticks at the entrance of the city. Elijah called out to her "Please bring me a small cup full of water to dip." She left to get it, and he called out after her, "Please bring along a bit of bread." She answered, "I have nothing baked, and there is only a handful of flour in my jar and a little oil in my jug." She said she had collected a few dried sticks to prepare something for herself and her son to eat; when they have eaten, they will die for there is nothing else for them to eat. Elijah told her "Do not be afraid. Go and do as you propose but make me a little cake and bring it to me. Then you can prepare for your son and yourself." She did what Elijah told her. The jar of flour did not go empty, nor the jug of oil run dry until the Lord sent rain on the land. (1Kings 17:7-16)

Pray for faith and confidence. Keep giving to the hungry, to the thirsty, the naked, the beggars, and the sick. Somehow God will provide. Give, give, and give until the jar of flour is empty.

Live! Live! Live! Trust in Him, have faith. The Lord is with Him. Pour yourself out in service of the Lord

It is He who feeds 5,000 with a few fish and loaves of bread.



We are all weak people, sinners, empty jars, people enduring draught, waiting for rains. We are sinners. We are to reach out for Him, He who sends water on dry land.

During Lent, let us be people who love, who give, who trust, who have faith. Like the old widow who fed Elijah with her last bit of flour and oil. Let us give until we have empty jars, then the Lord will pour forth in abundance – that we never expected.

May your Lent be full of trust, faith, and confidence in the Lord

- Fr. Richard Ho Lung, MOP

“HERE AM I, SEND ME!”



A Day of Outing: Our residents with the Brothers from Good Shepherd Home in Mengo-Kisenyi, Uganda Mission



OUR MEDICAL & DENTAL MISSION IN BGY. CARARAYAN, NAGA MISSION

A yearly event spearheaded by the Missionaries of the Poor in Bgy. Cararayan, Naga City in partnership with Maronites on Mission of Australia (MOM), a Christian voluntary organization that helps marginalized sectors of society.



Corpus Christi Novitiate Kingston, Ja.

12 Novices from India, Indonesia and the Philippines joined the Novitiate Formation in Jamaica early this year.



MOP Trinidad & Tobago Mission: A rundown two-storey building donated by St. Vincent de Paul Society. It is intended to be rebuilt and will shelter 60 - 70 homeless people.



THREE PILLARS OF LENT

PRAYER, FASTING, AND ALMSGIVING

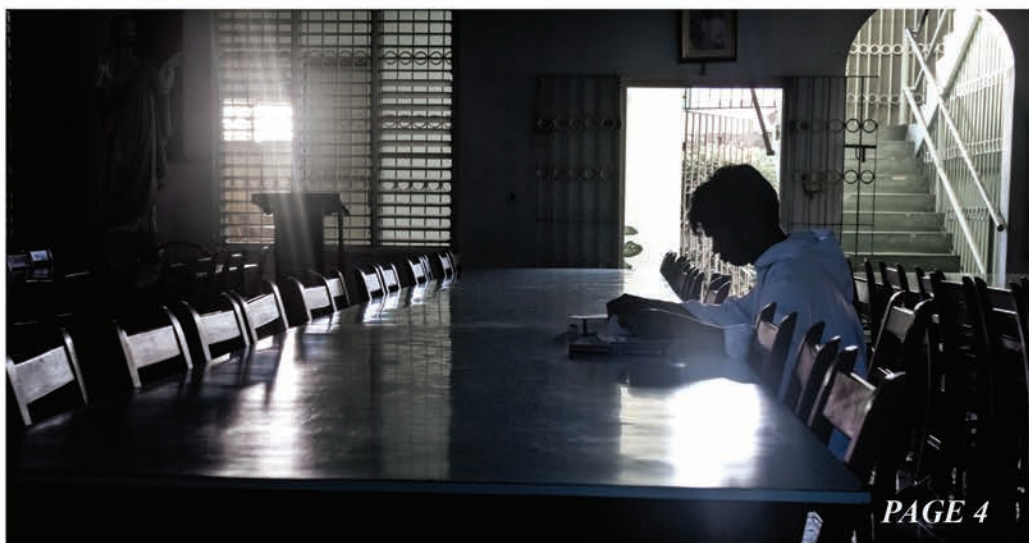
by Brother Elijah Kujur, MOP

Prayer: As Christians we are supposed to be praying anyway, so why make it a requirement? Because the sad truth is that many Christians do not pray, at least not with any regularity. And many call themselves Christian and don't even go to church, they are just "Christian" for name's sake. I think if you are honest with yourself, you'd admit that at some point in your life you have done this too. This is the reason why the Church includes prayer as one of the pillars of Lent. It is to remind us that prayer is one of the most important things we must do in our lives. This Lent, I offer this challenge: increase your prayer life, pray for yourself, for your family, and for the Church as a whole. Pray for the shepherds of Christ's church,



the successors of the apostles who perhaps need more prayer than anybody else in the world today. Try to do it for 40 days beginning from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday. I guarantee that you'll see much spiritual growth. If you are already praying daily, then start adding a few more minutes each day, read the Scriptures and allow yourself to be immersed in the Word of God. Then you'll find that your life becomes much closer to God and that you could relate to Him as a child to his father. As St. Augustine says: "The world could survive more easily without the sun than without the Mass". Let our prayer be fervent and our faith alive. As St. Thomas Aquinas says: "If a Christian is not growing, he is dead. There is no stagnation in Christ."

Fasting: Believe it or not, there are only two days of the year that Catholics are required to fast and abstain. One is Ash Wednesday and the other is Good Friday. Both are days of fasting and abstinence. What's the difference between the two you might ask? Fasting goes very well with prayer. It's like salt and pepper, they just work well together. One reason is that by fasting, we deny our human appetites, both literally and figuratively, and it makes us focus more intensely on our spiritual life. In fasting,



we not only control ourselves from eating food, but also fasting in spirit. Fasting and abstaining from food means denying ourselves from that which perishes, so that we can be filled with the food that endures to eternal life. Fasting in spirit means abstaining from worldliness and from evil desires that lead to spiritual death. Indeed we must take up this challenge if we really want to follow in the footsteps of Christ. Every time your stomach rumbles, think of how hungry Jesus must have been during his forty days in the desert. How hungry and thirsty he was while hanging on the cross! These we must consider, that no matter how hard and difficult it was for our Lord, yet he did it because of his love for us, and so we must do the same.

Almsgiving: Almsgiving is really just another name for charitable giving. Alms comes from a word which means pity, while charity comes from the Latin word "caritas," which means love. St Francis of Assisi says: "it is in giving that we will receive." As Christians we believe that giving to the one who is in need is giving to God Himself, no matter how small it is, as long as we give out of love. We give materially when we have with us, but when we do not have we can still give of ourselves, our time, our talents or anything we can do for the sake of Christian charity. In season and out of season, we must give of ourselves, pour out ourselves so that others may live. But just as with anything else we must be careful lest we give for the wrong reasons, and not out of authentic charity. In the Scriptures we see the rich people put in large sums, while the poor widow came and put in two copper coins, which equals a penny. And Jesus called his disciples to him, and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For they all contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, her whole living." As St. Theresa of Calcutta says: "Give until it hurts." Surely, our act of giving hasn't hurt us yet, so this season of Lent is a time to get hurt in giving more of ourselves, pouring ourselves out in order to share the glory that awaits us with Jesus our model and example.



Fr. Ho Lung among the street children in San Andres, Manila



If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one.
- St. Theresa of Calcutta

Minimum Requirements: During Lent, we are to pray, fast, and give. How long, how intensely, and how much, is up to you. You can fast and abstain to the barest of minimum, eating every few hours, but making sure that you stay within the rules. You can give an extra \$20 for collection on Sundays. All these would satisfy the letter of the law, but would they satisfy the spirit of the law? Let us face some of the challenges in our life. Surely, we can still give up chocolates or sodas, but let's also take on something more from each of the three pillars of Lent. Let's pray more fervently, fast more frequently, and give more freely. If we increase these virtues during Lent, hopefully it may carry over into the rest of the year. Let's make sure we do it all with the proper motives, and remember the admonishments that Jesus gave concerning praying, almsgiving, and fasting in Matthew chapter 6: "don't do it for the praises of men, but for the glory of God." Amen!

DOING SMALL THINGS WITH GREAT LOVE

by Marki Taucedo ST PAUL'S, TAMPA, FL USA

"Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love." (Mother Teresa)

I love this beautiful quote from St. Mother Teresa. This was my sixth mission trip, my first to Jamaica. I worried about what I had to offer, I wasn't trained medically, but I did have a willing spirit, a warm smile, love in abundance. I witnessed this and so much more in the Brothers and Sisters of the Missionaries of the Poor. Their joy, compassion and selflessness were palpable and an inspiration, as we had the great privilege of ministering with them to the poor.

Where does this strength to die to self daily come from? To be poured out in service and compassion to others without limit? It is Christ crucified. As we prepare for Lent we are reminded of St Paul's words to us in Colossians 1:24, "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh, I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of His body, that is, the Church." We must look at our trials, sufferings and struggles as part of the "cup" He promised to those who believe in Him. St. Paul sees his own suffering, and so should we, as the visible reenactment of the sufferings of Christ so that others may see Christ's love in us.

The day I wrote this article was spent with my sister Carleen who has stage 4 cancer. God often calls us to "exercise" our faith. If God didn't give us opportunities to exercise our faith we wouldn't have the spiritual "muscle" to combat, with His grace, the challenges we all must face.

I was so blessed and fortified by the constant call to prayer while living with the Brothers on Mission. Without a doubt it is what sustains them: their faith and trust in a God who always keeps His promise and sustains us through our darkest hours when we trust and surrender completely to Him.



I will never forget the beautiful men, women and children we met and served on mission. When I was sharing pictures on the MOP web-site with family and friends before we left, they often asked, "Marki, won't it be hard for you see the disabilities and severe needs of the residents?" And it was sometimes hard.

With God's grace, however, I felt I saw them as God saw them, perfect, sinless, without blemish.

That they surely will go straight to heaven someday, which is more than I can say for certainty for any of us! I do not know what the future holds for my sister, our dear friends that we served on mission, or what my future holds for that matter. I do know that I can trust the One who holds our future in the palm of His hand -- and so can you!

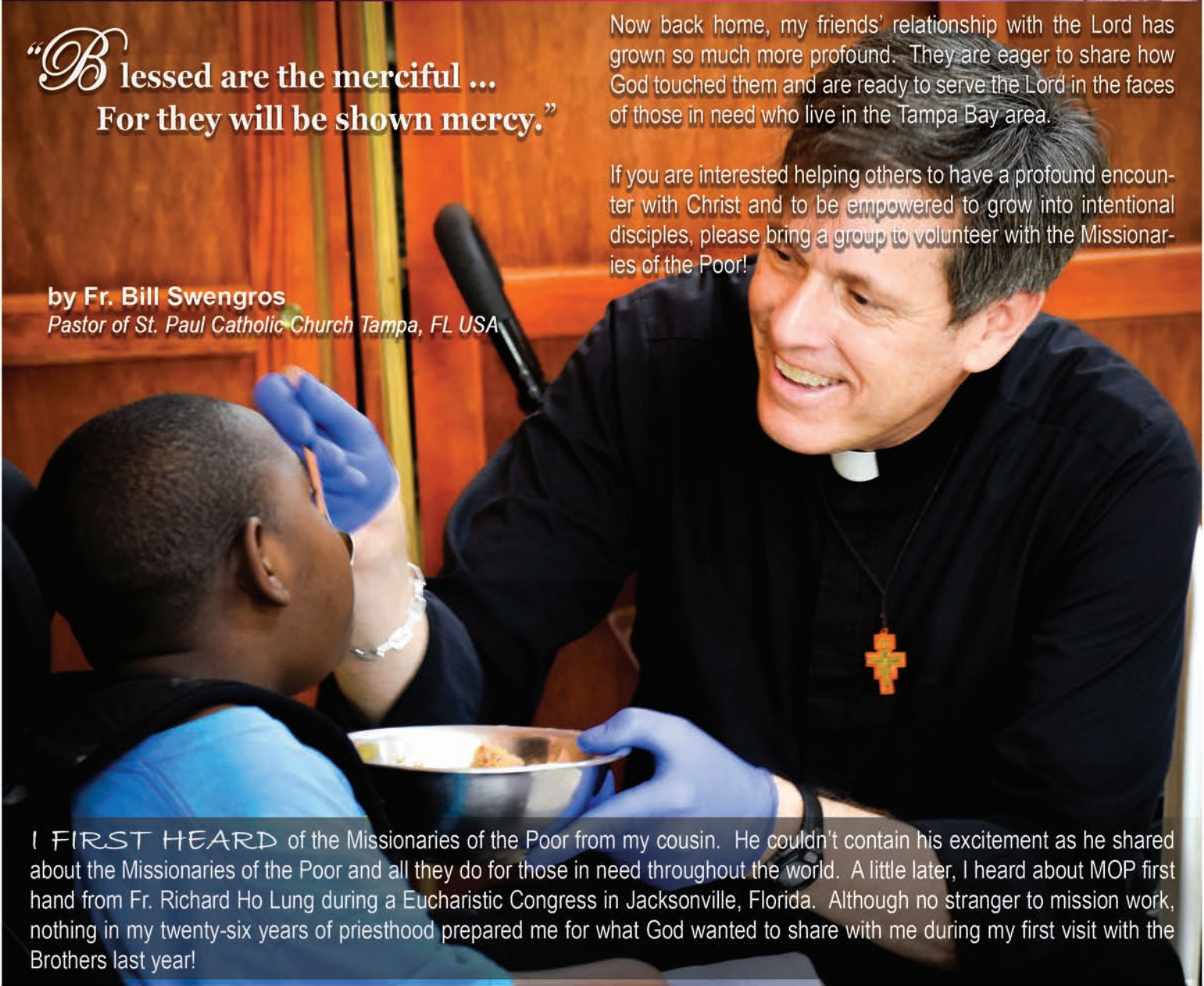


**"Blessed are the merciful ...
For they will be shown mercy."**

by Fr. Bill Swengros
Pastor of St. Paul Catholic Church Tampa, FL USA

Now back home, my friends' relationship with the Lord has grown so much more profound. They are eager to share how God touched them and are ready to serve the Lord in the faces of those in need who live in the Tampa Bay area.

If you are interested helping others to have a profound encounter with Christ and to be empowered to grow into intentional disciples, please bring a group to volunteer with the Missionaries of the Poor!



I FIRST HEARD of the Missionaries of the Poor from my cousin. He couldn't contain his excitement as he shared about the Missionaries of the Poor and all they do for those in need throughout the world. A little later, I heard about MOP first hand from Fr. Richard Ho Lung during a Eucharistic Congress in Jacksonville, Florida. Although no stranger to mission work, nothing in my twenty-six years of priesthood prepared me for what God wanted to share with me during my first visit with the Brothers last year!

From the time I arrived in Jamaica, I was touched by the way God's love and mercy radiated through the lives of each Missionary of the Poor. The Brothers and Sisters literally glowed with the Holy Spirit. My service at the Centers was certainly life changing as it challenged me to grow beyond my comfort zone and to truly serve Christ "in the distressing disguise of the poor." Parishioners noticed how I changed and I felt certain the Lord wanted me to return with a group of parishioners.

And so I did, with 18 of my parishioners. Our days were filled with prayer, reflection, laughter, tears, and much hard work. All of us were profoundly changed by the encounter with the residents, the Brothers and Sisters, and with our fellow volunteers. As one 21-year old shared, "I am a new man."

"...I urge the members of the Church to take up the Lenten journey with enthusiasm, sustained by almsgiving, fasting and prayer. If, at times, the flame of charity seems to die in our own hearts, know that this is never the case in the heart of God! He constantly gives us a chance to begin loving anew..."

- Pope Francis on his Lenten message 2018



Testimony from Queen of the Most Holy Rosary Association

by Loris Turk, QMHR member; Sydney, Australia

*I*t's been a year since my last visit to MOP Jamaica and I felt reunited as a family, once again welcomed with open arms.

MOP Jamaica is a very special place with a deep connection between brokenness, love and grace where in touching each other's brokenness, we find Jesus.

Volunteering is a very humbling experience, a duty I embrace in seeing Jesus in disguise whether it is the resident who would just gaze into my eyes as I was feeding her, the little girl curled up in the corner of her bed with a broken leg sobbing who let me comfort her, or a baby who suffers from congenital hydrocephalus with excruciating pain he endures daily, yet raises his eyes as I am feeding him and smiles.



Our **MOP Timor Leste Mission** has received our first 12 Timorese candidates and 2 were vested as postulants. God has truly answered our prayers and we pray that as they surrender themselves to God through a life of consecration in the service of the least fortunate and homeless, they may be filled with every grace they need.

*Mary, cause of our joy,
Pray for us.*

Seeing Jesus in others is really a lifelong journey, one that transforms our hearts, transforms our lives, and transforms our world.

I'm reminded that there are children and people around the world that are dying without anything and anyone, forgotten by the world, rejected, unwanted, unloved. But it gives me so much reassurance and peace that at Missionaries of the Poor, they are given so much love and compassion.

These selfless Brothers and Sisters of MOP have left behind their lives, their homes and families to care for the poorest of the poor. Their love radiates as the one person they are serving at any given moment, is Jesus.

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